

in all walks of life. I am amazed, as a matter of fact, sometimes when I recall even the Preamble to our Constitution, when we say, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal,"; and at the same time, we left out women. Some people would suggest that when they said "men" they meant women as well, but I am not always sure of that.

As a matter of fact, we can look at what the experiences have been. Even though we have Title IX, only 42 percent of college athletes are female and female athletes receive \$133 million fewer scholarship dollars per year than their male counterparts. This proves that, if anything, Title IX needs to be strengthened as we still face inequities in athletics today.

We have to keep Title IX alive; we have to make sure that it is strong; and we have to keep working so that there is in fact equality across the board without regard to race, gender, ethnicity, or any other form of origin.

America is a great Nation. We have made lots of progress and we have come a long way, but we still have much further to go. I do not believe we will ever get where we need to be unless we reinforce all of those processes that we have used to get us where we are. Keeping Title IX will continue the successes that we have seen with teams like the Bulldogs and with other athletic teams in the future.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to support H. Res. 171, commending the University of Minnesota Duluth women's hockey team for winning the NCAA 2003 National Collegiate Women's Ice Hockey Championship. I also want to congratulate Bulldogs Coach Shannon Miller on being named the 2003 American Hockey Coaches Association Women's University Division Coach of the Year. We are all proud of the extraordinary accomplishments of these women.

The March 23 triumph of the UMD Bulldogs over Harvard has been referred to as the greatest game in the history of college women's hockey. Played before a record-breaking crowd of over 5,000, the double-overtime 4 to 3 defeat of Harvard gave the Bulldogs their third consecutive national championship. In only the fourth season of their existence, the Bulldogs have brought the sport of women's hockey to a new and exciting level.

The success that this team has achieved over the past few years has helped to fuel a women's hockey explosion in Minnesota and across the country. Twenty-nine colleges now sponsor Division I teams, and the NCAA is considering expanding its field in 2005. In Minnesota, the number of high school women's hockey teams has rocketed from 24 in 1995 to 128 today. Nationwide, the number of girls and women playing ice hockey has increased more than four-fold in the last decade, with more than 39,000 registered females playing today.

The success of the Bulldogs and the ever-growing opportunities for women in sports remind us of the importance of Title IX—the landmark legislation that banned sex discrimination in schools. Over the past 30 years, Title IX has kicked open the door for women and girls in athletics and education. Since the passage of Title IX, girls have gone from hoping for a team to hoping to make the team.

Unfortunately, there are some who would like to turn back the clock and see this law weakened. But as women continue to make

strides toward equal opportunity, Title IX must remain strong. We must uphold the progress that we have made and continue to expand opportunities for our daughters, granddaughters and generations beyond. Every girl must be given the chance to one day become a national champion.

Once again, I congratulate the UMB Bulldogs on their achievements.

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KLINE. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 171.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. KLINE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ACCOUNTANT, COMPLIANCE, AND ENFORCEMENT STAFFING ACT OF 2003

Mr. BAKER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 658) to provide for the protection of investors, increase confidence in the capital markets system, and fully implement the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2003 by streamlining the hiring process for certain employment positions in the Securities and Exchange Commission, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 658

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Accountant, Compliance, and Enforcement Staffing Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. APPOINTMENT OF ACCOUNTANTS, ECONOMISTS, AND EXAMINERS BY THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 31 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 3114. Appointment of accountants, economists, and examiners by the Securities and Exchange Commission

"(a) APPLICABILITY.—This section applies with respect to any position of accountant, economist, and securities compliance examiner at the Commission that is in the competitive service.

"(b) APPOINTMENT AUTHORITY.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may appoint candidates to any position described in subsection (a)—

"(A) in accordance with the statutes, rules, and regulations governing appointments in the excepted service; and

"(B) notwithstanding any statutes, rules, and regulations governing appointments in the competitive service.

"(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—The appointment of a candidate to a position under authority of this subsection shall not be considered to cause such position to be converted from the competitive service to the excepted service.

"(c) REPORTS.—No later than 90 days after the end of fiscal year 2003 (for fiscal year 2003) and 90 days after the end of fiscal year 2005 (for fiscal years 2004 and 2005), the Commission shall submit a report with respect to its exercise of the authority granted by subsection (b) during such fiscal years to the Committee on Government Reform and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Governmental Affairs and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate. Such reports shall describe the changes in the hiring process authorized by such subsection, including relevant information related to—

"(1) the quality of candidates;

"(2) the procedures used by the Commission to select candidates through the streamlined hiring process;

"(3) the numbers, types, and grades of employees hired under the authority;

"(4) any benefits or shortcomings associated with the use of the authority;

"(5) the effect of the exercise of the authority on the hiring of veterans and other demographic groups; and

"(6) the way in which managers were trained in the administration of the streamlined hiring system.

"(d) COMMISSION DEFINED.—For purposes of this section, the term 'Commission' means the Securities and Exchange Commission."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 31 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3113 the following:

"3114. Appointment of accountants, economists, and examiners by the Securities and Exchange Commission."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BAKER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. BAKER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It is not long ago that the revolutions of corporate misgovernance became apparent to not only those within the corporate world, but to investors around the country. The resulting consequences led many hard-working families who had planned on retirements to reconsider those plans, as the value of the 401(k)s and pensions and savings plans eroded, literally overnight.

In addition to those concerns, it was revealed to the American people that there were corporate executives who

had abused their privileges as the leader of an important national corporation and taken resources inappropriately, illegally, and used them for their own personal gain.

In light of these revelations, the SEC came to this Congress and first asked for additional funding to enhance their regulatory and enforcement capabilities, and this Congress responded. Unfortunately, because of the rules in which the Securities and Exchange Commission is constrained, the ability to utilize that \$300 million was greatly inhibited.

□ 1230

In fact, there is a provision within the securities and exchange civil service law which provides for expedited hiring of legal counsel. This particular provision is very narrow in scope but has been utilized successfully over the years to enable the SEC to acquire those legal services as it deems necessary. This provision is known as the excepted service. It is the purpose of this resolution to expand the scope of the excepted service to enable the SEC to further respond to identified problems in the area of accountancy, examination and economics.

If passed, this resolution would enable the Commission to move in an expedited manner to hire the needed accountants, examiners and economists in order to fulfill the mission described for them by this Congress. It solves these problems in a proficient and expedited manner and is important that the SEC have these authorities as stipulated to restore confidence to the investing public.

This is achieved without, I am aware, any opposition to the manner in which the bill is currently constructed. In fact, the union that represents the affected class of employees has now endorsed the legislation in its current form. I am not aware of any pending objection. I am aware of broad-based support, bipartisan support, and the legislation was reported out of committee without objection.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am glad to join in urging support for this bill. I want to recognize the good work done by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KANJORSKI) who is the ranking Democrat on this subcommittee, who could not be here with us today, but he spent a lot of time on it, and we have a very useful compromise.

Essentially, we had this situation where we all agreed there was a need to expand the Securities and Exchange Commission. We responded more slowly than it would have liked, but we responded by increasing the budget to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Essentially, what happened is the legislation passed last year to improve

the regulation of the corporate sector authorized increased spending for the SEC. The Congress was slow in living up to that promise, but finally, by early this year, we did it, but then the question was having voted on the additional money, in their case overwhelmingly for staff, how quickly could we hire people because under the normal rules the Federal Government is not expeditious in hiring people, and that is reasonable. There is often not an emergency, and we want to make sure we do it right.

In this case, we wanted to see that hiring was done more quickly. There was an original proposal that came that would have allowed people to be hired very quickly and, once hired, to remain in a somewhat separate status from other employees.

I want to acknowledge the very responsive attitude of the union that represents employees at the SEC, the National Treasury Employees Union. I met and talked with them, as did the gentleman from Pennsylvania whom I have mentioned, and we found them to be, not surprisingly, as they usually are, in a very cooperative mood, and they understood that there were two important issues. One was to enhance the ability of the SEC to hire people quickly so we could put the regulatory structure in place, but also to make sure that employees hired had the protections that any employee is entitled to have against political abuse, against arbitrary mistreatment, et cetera.

So what this legislation embodies is a very sensible compromise. The SEC will be given under this bill the ability to hire quickly. It will be able to hire without some of the normal rules that would slow them down, but once the people are hired, they will then have all the rights and all of the protections that any other employee would have had. It meets the need and sometimes what we do in government is kind of overdo or underdo.

The need here was to hire quickly. There was not the need, we felt, to totally revamp the employee procedures of the SEC. This bill is carefully tailored to do exactly what was needed and no more. It allows the SEC to hire quickly, to take full advantage of the additional funds. My understanding is that over 500 people will be hired under this, accountants and economists and others, but once they are hired, they will not be different than the other employees. We will not have this problem of two classes of employees, some with this set of rights, some with that set of rights. They will be fully integrated into the SEC's workforce.

It is a workforce which does very good work, which has been overstressed because we gave them a lot more to do and did not immediately give them the resources. This is a case where taking the appropriation bill, together with this bill, we will have given the SEC, whose new chairman, I must say Mr. Donaldson seems to be performing admirably, and I think we are all encour-

aged that he has done so well, and I think that contributes to the enthusiasm with which we support this legislation. There is a great deal of confidence that he will use this authority in a very appropriate way.

What we have done now is to structure things so the SEC will be able to take full advantage of the appropriation. They will be able to hire the people and the investing public and the American economy will get the protection they deserve.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BAKER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, for the purpose of just complimenting the gentleman on his statement and expressing my appreciation to him for the courtesies extended during the formulation of this legislation.

At the outset, there were modest differences. I think we were able to reach compromise, and I think not only for the SEC function but for taxpayers, shareholders as well, and I appreciate the courtesies extended.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY).

Mrs. KELLY. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 658, the Accountant, Compliance and Enforcement Staffing Act of 2003. This legislation will help streamline the hiring process at the SEC, and it will allow the Commission to employ additional, much-needed securities industry accountants, compliance examiners and economists in an expedited manner. Believe me, they need it.

As we work to improve investor confidence, I think it is very important that we work to strengthen the SEC and send a clear message to the American people that we are not going to tolerate corporate misconduct.

Last year, Congress increased the funding for the SEC by more than \$270 million. It was a 62 percent increase. We did that because we want to help America understand that we are not going to tolerate corporate misconduct. This monumental increase will help the SEC to enhance their overall operations which are crucial to implementing and enforcing new corporate governance requirements under the Sarbanes-Oxley bill, but the Commission is still severely hamstrung by current hiring practices. Now the need for this legislation is more urgent than ever.

With the hiring of accountant positions lagging far behind other professionals in the SEC, it is imperative that Congress give the Commission direct hiring authority for these critical positions. What we must do is enable the agency to fill them in a timely manner, the quicker the better, and that is what this legislation does.

I commend the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER) for introducing this important legislation and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. OXLEY) for moving it through the committee and

working with the House leadership to get it on the floor. They have continued to work tirelessly on these issue and they are to be commended.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and help the SEC protect America's investors and restore integrity in the market.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BAKER. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE).

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 658, the Accountant, Compliance and Enforcement Staffing Act of 2003. This very critical legislation will allow the Securities and Exchange Commission to hire much-needed accountants, compliance examiners and economists outside of the bureaucratic and burdensome civil service hiring guidelines.

In fiscal year 2003, we increased the Securities and Exchange Commission's budget by 63 percent, largely to allow for an additional 800 professional staff members. On top of that, last year's supplemental appropriation bill provided \$25 million to the SEC for the purpose of hiring 125 new accountants, examiners and economists. This increased funding was provided because the SEC desperately needs these professionals to enforce the Sarbanes-Oxley corporate accountability reforms, corporate accountability standards that were established by this body and standards that are very vital importance for investor protection. Yet, because of the bureaucratic civil service hiring guidelines, these positions have not yet been filled.

H.R. 658 does not set new precedent. Indeed, all FBI employees, as well as health care professionals at the Department of Defense, are exempt from civil service hiring standards. This is good, common sense legislation that will significantly help the Securities and Exchange Commission protect investors.

I commend the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER) for crafting this important and very timely bipartisan bill, and I urge my colleagues to join me in support.

Mrs. KELLY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to control the remainder of the time for consideration of H.R. 658.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. OXLEY. Madam Speaker, this no-cost, commonsense legislation will help the Securities and Exchange Commission carry out its critical mission of protecting investors and promoting capital formation and economic growth.

With the passage of last year's corporate accountability legislation and a substantial budgetary increase, this year the understaffed SEC must hire over 800 new professionals—accountants, securities compliance examiners,

and economists—in order to fulfill its regulatory obligations.

In a troubling development, the Commission has had an extraordinarily difficult time hiring these accountants and other professionals responsible for monitoring compliance with the securities laws. Under current bureaucratic rules, it takes the Commission up to 6 months to hire a single accountant, examiner, or economist. Attorneys are classified as "excepted service" employees and thus fall outside these burdensome hiring requirements.

Quite simply, this legislation will make it easier for the SEC to hire these professionals in an expeditious manner. That is good news for investors, and will help restore public confidence in the markets. It is strongly supported by both the union and management at the Commission.

I want to commend Chairman BAKER for crafting an excellent bipartisan bill and urge all my colleagues to join me in support. I yield back.

Madam Speaker, I also want to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS), the chairman of the Committee on Government Reform, for his cooperation and assistance in moving this important measure forward. I am placing in the RECORD an exchange of correspondence regarding our committees' jurisdiction on this matter.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC, June 16, 2003.

Hon. MICHAEL G. OXLEY,
Chairman, Committee on Financial Services,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. OXLEY: Thank you for working with me in developing H.R. 658, "Accountant, Compliance, and Enforcement Staffing Act of 2003." As you know, the Committee on Government Reform reported the bill, H.R. 1836, the Civil Service and National Security Personnel Improvement Act. Included in that Act was Title III, Subtitle A, Securities and Exchange Commission. It is my understanding that you intend to move H.R. 658 to the floor through the suspension process with an amendment that will be substantially the same as Title III, Subtitle A of H.R. 1836, as reported.

In the interests of moving this important legislation forward, I am supporting your request to move H.R. 658 through the suspension process with an amendment in the jurisdiction of the Committee on Government Reform. The Committee does hold an interest in preserving its future jurisdiction with respect to issues raised in the amendment, and its jurisdictional prerogatives should the provisions of this bill or any Senate amendments thereto be considered in a conference with the Senate. Therefore, I respectfully request your support for the appointment of an appropriate number of Members from our respective Committees should such a conference arise.

Finally, I would ask that you include a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter in the Congressional Record during floor consideration. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

TOM DAVIS,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, June 16, 2003.

Hon. TOM DAVIS,
Chairman, Committee on Government Reform,
Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you for your recent letter regarding your Committee's ju-

risdictional interest in H.R. 658, the Accountant, Compliance, and Enforcement Staffing Act of 2003. I appreciate all of your efforts to ensure that the Securities and Exchange Commission has the resources it needs to effectively carry out its responsibilities under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.

Your understanding regarding the amendment to H.R. 658 to be considered under suspension of the rules is correct, and the text of the amendment will be substantially similar to title III, subtitle A of H.R. 1836, as reported.

I acknowledge your committee's jurisdictional interest in this legislation and appreciate your cooperation in allowing speedy consideration of the bill and amendment. I agree that your decision to forego further action on the bill will not prejudice the Committee on the Government Reform with respect to its jurisdictional prerogatives on this or similar legislation. I will support your request for an appropriate number of conferees should there be a House-Senate conference on this or similar legislation.

Finally, I will include a copy of your letter and this response in the Congressional Record when the legislation is considered by the House.

Thank you again for your assistance.

Sincerely,
MICHAEL G. OXLEY,
Chairman.

Mr. KANJORSKI. Madam Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 658, the Accountant, Compliance and Enforcement Staffing Act of 2003. Investor protection is one of my top priorities for my work on the House Financial Services Committee, and H.R. 658 will improve investor protection by allowing the Securities and Exchange Commission to accelerate the hiring process for hundreds of accountants, economists, and compliance examiners. As a result, I support this bill.

During the last year, Democrats led the efforts in Congress to significantly augment the resources available to the Securities and Exchange Commission, including increasing its annual budget by more than \$270 million. We increased this funding to help the Commission to effectively implement the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, which we enacted in 2002 in response to a series of large-scale corporate scandals at companies like Enron, WorldCom, Tyco, Global Crossing, Adelphia, and Rite Aid.

The increased appropriations provided to the Commission have permitted the hiring of hundreds of new professionals to police the securities industry. The SEC estimates that the additional resources provided by the fiscal 2003 budget will result in the hiring of 200 lawyers, 250 accountants, 300 examiners, 10 economists, and some other specialists. This increase in the Commission's labor force comes on top of the additional 125 professionals that we allowed the agency to hire as a result of the fiscal 2002 supplemental appropriation law.

Unfortunately, as it has worked in implement the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and restore investor confidence in our capital markets, the Commission has encountered some difficulties in identifying and expeditiously hiring the best workers for many of these new positions. H.R. 658 seeks to address this problem by streamlining the hiring process at the Commission for a number of specialized professions. The Commission, like all other government agencies, already has similar authority for recruiting and hiring attorneys.

The legislative language contained in this bill resulted from negotiations between the

Commission's management and the National Treasury Employees Union's leaders. As a result, this legislation will accelerate the hiring of mission-critical workers at the Commission, it will protect the rights of these employees, and it will advance investor protection. I support each of these worthwhile goals, and congratulate the Commission and the National Treasury Employees Union for their good work. Their joint efforts help to demonstrate the effectiveness of labor-management cooperation in the federal workplace.

I am also pleased that the legislation we are considering today, unlike the introduced bill, will require the Commission to conduct two studies about the implementation of this special hiring authority. The inclusion of this study provision, which I requested, will provide the Congress with information on the use of the authority, including its impact on the hiring of veterans, minorities, and other demographic groups, that will be needed to evaluate the effects of this change in the law. It is my expectation that the Commission will use the expansion of its professional ranks as an opportunity to aggressively seek qualified veterans and minorities to serve at the Commission.

Although I support this bill, I differ with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle on one remaining issue: the length of time that the Commission should have this special hiring power. As currently drafted, H.R. 658 would provide the SEC with the permanent authority to bypass civil service rules in order to accelerate the hiring process for accountants, economists, and compliance examiners. I believe that this special authority, requested by the Commission in a time of urgency, should sunset so that the Congress can evaluate the effectiveness of the program at an appropriate time. Because H.R. 658 will make extraordinary changes in the normal hiring process and because this power has the potential to be abused, the prudent course of action would have been for the Congress to sunset the law on a date certain and determine at that time whether to continue it. In short, the Congress should jealously guard the special powers that it grants government agencies.

Accordingly, during the consideration of H.R. 658 by the Financial Services Committee and the Government Reform Committee, I sought to make a good bill even better by offering an amendment to sunset the expedited hiring authority at the end of fiscal 2008. This amendment would have provided the Commission with sufficient time to meet its short-term staffing needs and preserved the ability of Congress to reevaluate this special power on a date certain. Although we did not include a sunset in this bill, H.R. 658 is still pragmatic and desirable legislation.

In closing, Madam Speaker, H.R. 658 will streamline the hiring process for hundreds of new professionals at the Commission, it will safeguard the civil service rights of these workers, and it will enhance investor protection. Notwithstanding my one reservation concerning a sunset, which I hope my colleagues in the Senate will fix during their consideration of this bill, I support H.R. 658 and urge its adoption by the full House.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, if the gentlewoman has no further requests for time, I congratulate the gentlewoman on being given the right to control nothing, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. KELLY. Madam Speaker, we have no further requests for time, and we yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 658, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT CONGRESS SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES TO PROVIDE DECENT HOMES FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 43) expressing the sense of Congress that Congress should participate in and support activities to provide decent homes for the people of the United States.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. CON. RES. 43

Whereas the United States promotes and encourages the creation and revitalization of sustainable and strong neighborhoods in partnership with States, cities, and local communities;

Whereas the United States promotes and encourages the creation and revitalization of sustainable and strong neighborhoods in partnership with States, cities, and local communities and in conjunction with the independent and collective actions of private citizens and organizations;

Whereas establishing a housing infrastructure strengthens neighborhoods and local economies and nurtures the families who reside in them;

Whereas an integral element of a strong community is a sufficient supply of affordable housing;

Whereas affordable housing may be provided in traditional and nontraditional forms, including apartment buildings, transitional and temporary homes, condominiums, cooperatives, and single family homes;

Whereas for many families a home is not merely shelter, but also provides an opportunity for growth, prosperity, and security;

Whereas homeownership is a cornerstone of the national economy because it spurs the production and sale of goods and services, generates new jobs, encourages savings and investment, promotes economic and civic responsibility, and enhances the financial security of all people in the United States;

Whereas although the United States is the first nation in the world to make owning a home a reality for a vast majority of its families, 1/3 of the families in the United States are not homeowners;

Whereas a disproportionate percentage of families in the United States that are not homeowners are low-income families;

Whereas 74.2 percent of Caucasian Americans own their own homes, only 47.1 percent of African Americans, 47.2 percent of Hispanic Americans, and 55.8 percent of Asian Americans and other races are homeowners;

Whereas the community building activities of neighborhood-based nonprofit organizations empower individuals to improve their lives and make communities safer and healthier for families;

Whereas one of the best known nonprofit housing organizations is Habitat for Humanity, which builds simple but adequate housing for less fortunate families and symbolizes the self-help approach to homeownership;

Whereas Habitat for Humanity is organized in all 50 States with 1,655 local affiliates and its own section 501(c)(3) Federal tax-exempt status and locally elected completely voluntary board of directors;

Whereas Habitat for Humanity has built nearly 150,000 houses worldwide and endeavors to complete another 50,000 homes by the year 2005;

Whereas Habitat for Humanity provides opportunities for people from every segment of society to volunteer to help make the American dream a reality for families who otherwise would not own a home; and

Whereas the month of June has been designated as "National Homeownership Month": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) everyone in the United States should have a decent home in which to live;

(2) Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives should demonstrate the importance of volunteerism;

(3) during the years of the 108th and 109th sessions of Congress, Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, Habitat for Humanity, and contributing organizations, should sponsor and construct 2 homes in the Washington, D.C., metro area each as part of the "Congress Building America" program;

(4) each Congress Building America house should be constructed primarily by Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, their families and staffs, and the staffs of sponsoring organizations working with local volunteers involving and symbolizing the partnership of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors of society;

(5) each Congress Building America house should be constructed with the participation of the family that will own the home;

(6) in the future, Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, their families, and their staff should participate in similar house building activities in their own States as part of National Homeownership Month; and

(7) these occasions should be used to emphasize and focus on the importance of providing decent homes for all of the people in the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARY G. MILLER) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GARY G. MILLER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this legislation.